

year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Leviticus is a book of shadows.

Shadows are pictures of a sort.

A shadow is caused by a combination of two things: Light and Substance. When the sun shines upon the steeple of the church it casts a shadow into the field beyond. The shadow is not the reality – it is an image of a reality. If you look only at the shadow you will not see clearly the SUBSTANCE it reveals – but it will point you to substance.

So it is that the shadows of Leviticus are not cast forward from some earlier time, but backwards, from a later time. For in Leviticus we find the shadows that are cast when the glory of God falls upon the cross of Christ.

The blood of bulls and goats is a mere shadow that cannot save – God accepted them on the basis of the faith of the people that God would justify the guilty and remain just.

But the reality points to the true payment.

BEHOLD – THE LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD.

And so, this book, which may seem at first to be a field of rocks – hard to plow and of small value – when gazed upon

through the illumination of the Holy Spirit is revealed to be a field of diamonds – ready to repay richly those who will mine its depths.

And so we begin. May our hearts be found to burn within us with the glory Leviticus reveals.

he rings it about with illustration after illustration. He gives CONCRETE FORMS to spiritual reality. But it is always the reality that is pointed to. No sacrifice or feast or priest or command is an end in itself – it is all intended to lead us to Christ.

c. The New Testament clearly declares that this was always the ULTIMATE purpose of the Old Testament:

i. From the moment that John the Baptist points to Jesus and declares: ‘Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!’ we find the New Testament alive with the light of Leviticus.

ii. Turn to John 5:39, 45-46 – **You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me...**

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

Do you understand what Jesus is declaring to the learned Jews in Jerusalem? He is declaring that their most sacred writings – the writings of Moses – the words of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are ABOUT JESUS. Jesus is the subject of the Penteteuch.

iii. Turn to Luke 24:25-27 – **And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**

The Old Testament sings with the story of redemption. Jesus is the subject of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is the story of how God redeems for himself a people – and the hero of the story is Jesus, the Son of God. How necessary these pictures repeated over and over again were to make clear the work that Jesus would finally complete – wouldn’t you like to hear a little of what Jesus described to those pilgrims on the road to Emmaus that made their hearts burn within them? Then you must hear Leviticus preached in its fullness.

iv. There are many other passages I could lead you to, but let me lead you finally to Hebrews 10:1-4 – **For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would not longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every**

portions of scripture – to undermine any is to undermine all.

ii. Full frontal assault on Leviticus.

- The liberal scholars reject Leviticus as a product of the wilderness wanderings and suggest that it was written in the time of the exile or the restoration. This is not the position I would hold and I find the position flawed on many levels. Not the least being that this denies divine authorship, and offers little help to a people deprived, not only of a tabernacle, but a temple and the ark.

- Liberals declare with every breath and pen-stroke that they do not believe. Even as they declare that they do believe – their position and attitude towards scripture declare that they are lacking the main QUALIFICATION for speaking about scripture – belief. (This is a statement open to the accusation of circular reasoning – but I make it and stand upon it. Scripture says as much – the gospel is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God unto salvation.)

b. Paul declares in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all scripture is breathed out by God and is useful. This would include the book of Leviticus. It is not a book of worn out commandments or by-gone practices.

c. We are a Bible people – and we will not allow any culture to dictate terms to scripture. We will not believe that Leviticus was written by someone who did not anticipate the 21st Century – the Holy Spirit is its author and it was written as much for the 21st Century as for people living 1400 years before Christ.

d. As we move through this book we will ask humbly the counsel of God on human morality and accept his Word EVEN if it means we can no longer be acceptable to the nation in which we are currently strangers and sojourners.

III. The Key to the Cross

a. If you were to ask the Israelite in the wilderness to tell you the primary purpose of the book of Leviticus; he would no doubt tell you that it was an instruction book on how God was to be worshipped – how a group of people who were not holy could be sanctified and made the people of a holy God. He would tell you that it contained instructions for all the different sacrifices; and all the different feasts; and a holiness code that restricted certain foods, fabrics and practices – it was a book given to those who trusted God to instruct them in how to live.

b. But he would only have defined the secondary purpose of this book. For the primary purpose of Leviticus was to show us Christ. God has always worked with pictures – he knows that spiritual truth cannot be simply grasped, and so

pork and shellfish are much more prone to carrying food-born bacteria. But this is an 'uneven' interpretation, for it is hard to make such a case for wearing garments made of two types of cloth.

I think it too small a thing to reduce the laws of Leviticus to issues of hygiene. I do not deny that there is good counsel to this effect – but this is not the chief end of Leviticus and must be set aside.

d. This is not a book for Jews alone.

Paul declares in Romans 15:4 – **For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

And in Galatians 3:24, writing to Gentiles about the purpose of the law, included, but not limited to, the book of Leviticus – **So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.**

e. This is a book about how a knowingly sinful people, live in community with a God who is holy. It is a book about how a holy God, sanctifies a sinful people and promises to accept them based on repentance and sacrifice.

f. This is a book that declares that God establishes the ways in which a human may worship him – and he will accept no strange fire. (We, in error, believe that God should take whatever worship he can get, and be grateful for it. But we error in that we fail to understand that we were made by God, we were made for God, God is not beholden to us, he is not in our debt – our God is a consuming fire – and it is at our peril that we seek to approach God without referring to the terms he has established for worship.

II. An Unholy War

a. The effort to SUBVERT the churches teaching on homosexuality, necessarily must SUBVERT the book of Leviticus.

i. Efforts to make Leviticus look foolish.

- Rachel Held Evans 'Year of Biblical Womanhood'. *While Evans stated goal is to build a bridge between conservative and liberal theology – she builds a bridge at the expense of scripture – making small and silly things that she doesn't like or agree with. She makes herself the prosecution, judge and jury of scripture and declares it wanting.*

- Facebook flowcharts – don't post things you don't understand. These sorts of things are written to undermine scripture – and while some people post them with the intent to undermine only certain

A Field of Stones

Subject: Leviticus

Theme: Why Give a Year to Leviticus

Passage: Leviticus, Luke, John, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews

Introduction: I have an old electrical manual in my hand. It isn't old enough to be of 'historic' interest – and it isn't new enough to contain up to date information – it is instead a manual produced around the 1940's. It has an interesting cover – but I think most people that had an interest in electricity, would prefer to read something recent or something written by Edison or Tesla – not this.

I imagine that is the way many of you feel about the book of Leviticus. Its in the Bible, so it seems that it has some purpose or value – but you'd rather read the gospels, or Romans – or Genesis and Isaiah. Leviticus seems old, washed out – boring.

In fact – you may look at this book as a field of stones – hard to plough and scarcely worth the effort. So why are we as a congregation about to plough into this field of stones for the better part of the coming year? Why spend months reflecting on these 27 chapters filled with ancient ceremonies, laws and sacrifices?

My reason is three-fold:

- I. The Average Christian is Confused by Leviticus
- II. The Book of Leviticus Has Become Ground Zero for Anti-Biblical Teachers
- III. The Book of Leviticus is the Key to the Person and Work of Christ – Especially His Cross Work

I. Christian Confusion

- a. A brief overview of the contents:
 - i. Laws of the Sacrifice (1-7)
 - ii. Laws of the Priesthood (8-10)
 - iii. Laws of Purification (11-16)
 - iv. Instructions for Holiness/Feasts (17-26)
 - v. Curses and Blessings (27)
- b. This is not a book on how to be justified by works.
...yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:16
- c. This is not a book on hygiene and sanitation.
Much speculation has been made that God established certain laws in order to ensure the health and well-being of his people in a time before modern medicine and refrigeration. We know that lamb can be eaten rare without any ill-effects – but